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RADIO DAYS



BRYANNA BRADLEY THE GAZETTE

Meghan Osborne (left), Jacob Nyveen and Karrinee Thambimuthu record a sound made by counsellor Aaron Lakoff during an exercise at CKUT's radio camp on Friday.

CKUT TEACHES a new generation of radio hopefuls about the ins and outs of broadcasting and the science of sound

Pass the mike to DJs of the future

CHLOÉ FEDIO THE GAZETTE

In an alley behind the CKUT studio on University St., 11-year-old Karrinee Thambimuthu picks up a scrap piece of plastic and hits it against a black wrought-iron fence. Jacob Nyveen stands next to her to collect the sound with a big red mike in one hand and a Marantz recorder in the other.

The compact professional recording device appears bulky in the hands of the 10-year-old, but he still looks the part of an audio expert — headphones cover his long blond locks and the multiple cords that sync up to his equipment are neatly organized on his person.

Jacob starts Grade 5 next week at JPPS elementary school, but for now he's learn-

ing the ins and outs of broadcasting at CKUT's radio camp, sponsored by the McGill Conservatory.

The sound-gathering excursion includes natural noises, too, like the rustling of branches in the wind. The goal is to get a diverse mix of sounds to bring back to the editing suite so that the kids can create a rhythmic mash-up, says camp counsellor Jessica Grosman.

CKUT, based at McGill University, is a non-profit radio station run by more than 200 volunteers and staff. Grosman joined the team three years ago with no radio experience and ended up with her own show. Now the radio guru passes along her knowledge of sound to a new generation of DJ hopefuls.

During the five-day camp, youngsters learn basic interviewing skills, and how to record and edit audio.

But while the kids use professional equipment and software, the workshops on manipulating sound can get a little goofy.

"Do you know Justin Bieber? Do you think he sings like a girl?" asks Karrinee.

With Grosman's guidance, she downloads the hit song One Time and lowers the teen pop star's voice using audio software.

"I wanted to change stuff to make it sound crazy. I changed his voice into a guy's voice," she says, quickly adding that she likes Bieber's music just fine the way it is. "I'm a huge fan."

Jacob, however, is more of

an alternative-rock enthusiast who listens to bands like Green Day and the Ramones. He interviewed the members of Nuclear Strings — a band formed during the two-week McGill Conservatory Garage Band day camp — and edited it down to a three-minute piece that aired on CKUT Friday afternoon, as part of his camp group's hour-long grand finale. (The camp offers six week-long sessions, with participants divided by age.)

"My favourite thing that I did was ... everything," Jacob says of his time at the camp.

Campers visited the Emile Berliner Museum, dedicated to the history of the record and the gramophone, and attended a jam session where they recorded sounds from

traditional instruments, like the electric guitar and the harp, and more eclectic homemade musical objects.

A DJ also came to CKUT to teach the campers how to scratch vinyl. Jacob used a recording of those sounds to create a jingle that promotes the station.

The kids got a taste of live radio when they hosted a CKUT music show on the first day of camp, but the Friday edition of Campin' Out was an opportunity to showcase their new-found technical skills. With the help of their two counsellors, the six day-campers acted as hosts, techies and producers of the hour-long show.

Naomi Bess, 9, took deep breaths during her live interview with CKUT Jamai-

can DJ Howard "Stretch" Carr, who hosts West Indian Rhythms every Saturday afternoon. Her question about the Jamaican community in Montreal drew praise from the veteran host.

"It's the last day. I wanna stay here forever," Naomi said Friday before the show.

This week marks the camp's final session of the summer. A group of 14- to 17-year-olds will host a music show on CKUT at 2 p.m. today. Tune in to 90.3 FM for the last live radio camp broadcast on Friday at 5 p.m., or stream previous broadcasts of Campin' Out online at www.ckut.ca/radiocamp.php

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